

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB284:
An Act Increasing the Age from Eight to Eighteen Years for an Income-Eligible Person to
Obtain Medical Assistance Regardless of Immigration Status
March 8, 2022

Dear Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, and Distinguished Members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Kristin Reese, and I am a Pediatrician in New Haven, CT.

I am writing in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.

Every child should have the right to access health care, and look forward to a safe, healthy and productive future. For undocumented children, lack of health insurance can lead to poor health outcomes. As a Pediatrician, I see children at regularly scheduled intervals to ensure proper growth and development, manage common childhood diseases such as asthma and diabetes, and to check in on mental health. Uninsured children are much less likely to get necessary medical care, preventive care, or timely treatment for illness or injuries.

The need for mental health care is especially pressing during the current child mental health state of emergency. Many undocumented children have already faced significant trauma in their lives, and without access to mental health care services, more children are presenting in crisis. Passage of S.B. 284 is critical to support the mental health of all children in Connecticut.

Not only is providing healthcare for all children in CT the right thing to do, but it is also the smart thing to do. Assuring health care access to all children reduces uncompensated emergency care, increases primary care detection of chronic disease and offers enormous long-term impacts: more academic success, higher rates of high school graduation and college attendance, and better future job prospects and income.

I support SB284, and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all community members in CT regardless of age or status, including parents and adults.

Sincerely,

Kristin Reese, MD